

The bindings of the 1862 and 1863 copies, save for a slightly narrower design on the sides and the omission of "Life in the Woods" on the backstrip, are exactly like the binding of the original *Walden* of 1854. In 1854 the "o" in "Co." on the backstrip was smaller than the "C," while in 1862 and again in 1863 the two letters are capitals. The end papers were lemon yellow in 1854, and maroon or chocolate in 1862 and 1863.

These facts about the second and third impressions of *Walden* may be of no more importance than similar facts about reprints of important books ordinarily are; but the history of the printing of *Walden* has been written several times, and each time these impressions have been omitted and the fourth impression has been called the second. In the interest of accurate bibliography it would seem wise to correct the record.

THE AUTHORSHIP AND DATE OF "THE AMERICAN PATRIOT'S PRAYER"

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"THE AMERICAN Patriot's Prayer" is a poem generally assigned to the Revolutionary Period, year 1776. The authorship is claimed by Conway for Thomas Paine.¹ He has this to say:

In Bell's addenda to "Common Sense," which contained Paine's Address to the Quakers (also letters by others), appeared a little poem which I believe his, and the expression of his creed.

The poem then follows, quoted in full. I insert it here in the interest of the discussion.

THE AMERICAN PATRIOT'S PRAYER

Parent of all, omnipotent
In heaven, and earth below,
Through all creation's bounds unspent,
Whose streams of goodness flow,

Teach me to know from whence I rose,
And unto what designed;
No private aims let me propose,
Since linked with human kind.

¹ *Life of Thomas Paine* (New York, 1892) I, 116.

But chief to hear my country's voice,
May all my thoughts incline:
'T is reason's law, 't is virtue's choice,
'T is nature's call and thine.

Me from fair freedom's sacred cause
Let nothing e'er divide;
Grandeur, nor gold, nor vain applause,
Nor friendship false misguide.

Let me not faction's partial hate
Pursue to this Land's woe;
Nor grasp the thunder of the state,
To wound a private foe.

If for the right to wish the wrong
My country shall combine,
Single to serve th' erroneous throng,
Spite of themselves, be mine.

"Every sacrifice" says Conway, "contemplated in this self-dedication had to be made. Paine had held nothing back from the cause."

Tyler also quotes the poem in full, under the title used by Conway and has the following to say about it:

. . . while in those early months of 1776, the people of this land were doubting or affirming, were cursing, weeping, fighting or fleeing from the fight, one man, whose name we know not, set down upon paper, and sent forth in print, a few lines of verse which, perhaps, would long ago have become celebrated in literature had they been uttered anywhere else than among ourselves, and which, at any rate, may convince us that in the midst of all that hurly-burly were men and women who knew how, alway, through all confusions, right guidance lies in the path of high principle and especially of trust in the Unseen Leader. These lines, thus written and printed, frame themselves into a prayer, laconic, austere, devout; they are a stately and sweet poem, fit to be placed by the side of any other of its kind that can be met with anywhere in the many-mansioned treasure-house of our English speech.²

He attaches a footnote that is significant for the fact that it brings doubt to bear on the Paine authorship theory advanced by Conway. For its bearing on the subject, the footnote is here quoted in full.

² *Literary History of the American Revolution* (New York, 1897) I, 177, 178.

This remarkable poem first appeared, so far as I am able to discover, in the "Large Additions to Common Sense," appended to the third edition of that pamphlet as published by Robert Bell, in Philadelphia, February 1776. Thomas Paine's latest and best biographer (M. D. Conway i. 116) seems to have been led by this fact to ascribe the poem to his hero. In that opinion I am unable to concur. Of course, the first appearance of the poem in the addenda to "Common Sense" does not at all prove that it was written by the author of that pamphlet; since Paine wrote but few, if any, of that miscellaneous collection of pieces. When one turns to the test of internal evidence, it seems to me difficult to conclude that this poem bears the characteristic marks of Paine's work. I do not recall anything, known to have been written by him, which, whatever its merit, is not somewhere marred by at least a touch of disproportion, of excess, of pungency verging towards truculence, and of a willingness to surrender his uncommon gift of expression to mere smartness of phrase; whereas this poem is characterized throughout by spiritual ripeness, by self-restraint, and by an entire freedom from any trace either of rancor or of rhetorical glitter.³

The fact that an authority of Tyler's undoubted reputation should single out the poem for such exalted praise, and should desire its recognition among the gems of our national literature, accentuates interest in the poem, for itself alone as well as for its alleged authorship.

The poem also finds a place in a recent volume of extracts and selections from the poetry and prose of the Revolution edited by Prescott and Nelson.⁴ It is quoted there in full, and under its common title, with the date 1776 assigned. No effort is made to ascribe authorship. However, in the introduction to the chapter on Revolutionary Songs and Ballads, the editors state:

There must be a permanent place in our literature for a few compositions . . . such for instance as those dignified, but eloquently simple poems, "The American Patriot's Prayer" and "The American Soldier's Hymn."

In a recent survey of the early almanacs in the Library of Congress I came upon this poem in *Whitefield's Almanack*⁵ for the year

³ *Literary History of the American Revolution* (New York, 1897) I, 177, 178.

⁴ *Prose and Poetry of the Revolution* (New York, 1925).

⁵ Chapin in his *Check List of Rhode Island Almanacs* (Worcester, 1915), states that James Franklin printed Whitefield's Almanack for 1760, and that it was the last one that

1760, Newport, Rhode Island. The title, instead of "The American Patriot's Prayer," appears simply as "The Patriot's Prayer." With the exception of minor differences in punctuation and capitalization, there is complete identity between the two poems until we come to the fifth stanza, which differs in a very important way. Instead of reading,

Let me not faction's partial hate
Pursue to this land's woe,

it reads

Let me not faction's partial hate,
Pursue to Britain's woe.

There are no further differences.

The poem is also found in two other early almanacs. It appears in *The Essex Almanack*,⁶ 1773, and differs in no particulars from the 1760 appearance in Whitefield's Almanack. Anthony Sharp carries it in *The Continental Almanack*,⁷ 1781, under the title, "The Patriot's Prayer," but makes still a third rendering of the second line of the fifth stanza. Here it reads:

Let me not faction's partial hate,
Pursue to Americ's woe.

It was a baffling habit of early almanac makers to fill the empty spaces in their almanacs with unsigned and unaccredited literary matter. Such is the fate of "The Patriot's Prayer." There is no clue in any of the three almanac sources as to who its author might be. Its appearance so early as 1760, and the phrase "Britain's woe," make it quite likely that it was written in England, though by no means certain. That it was published twice before 1776, in a relatively small collection of old almanacs,⁸ indicates that it must have been generally well known and esteemed before the Revolution.

came from his press. Because of the fictitious character of the author of Franklin's previous almanacs, Job Shepherd, and because no such person as Nathaniel Whitefield is recorded at Newport, he states that it is probable that Whitefield was a fictitious person.

⁶ *The Essex Almanack* for 1773 by Philo Freeman, Salem, Mass. S. and E. Hall, Printers.

⁷ *The Continental Almanack* for 1781 by Anthony Sharp, Philadelphia. Francis Bailey, Printer.

⁸ The ephemeral nature of almanacs has militated against their preservation in any large numbers. They enjoyed a very wide circulation during the eighteenth century, some issues

The form of the poem in Bell's *Addenda to Common Sense*, the source from which Conway and Tyler both drew it, with its changed title, and the adapted phrasing of the second line of the fifth stanza, point to its use as a poem of Revolutionary propaganda. Did Paine so adapt it in 1776? It is possible. It is also possible that Anthony Sharp, in 1781, brought it into the service of a growing national feeling by changing "this land's woe" to "America's woe."

Speculations are beside the point. The appearance of the poem as early as the year 1760 throws no positive light on the problem of authorship. It does, however, definitely remove it from the Paine bibliography. And, what is even more important, it removes it from the bibliography of poems of the American Revolution.

WIELAND AND FRANKENSTEIN

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AS IS WELL known, both Percy and Mary Shelley read Brockden Brown's novels. In a familiar passage Peacock records Shelley's reading of *Wieland*, *Ormond*, *Edgar Huntley*, and *Arthur Mervyn*, and speaks of their profound influence on him. "Brown's four novels, Schiller's *Robbers*, and Goethe's *Faust* were, of all the works with which he was familiar, those which took the deepest root in Shelley's mind; and had the strongest influence on the formation of his character. He devotedly admired Wordsworth and Coleridge; . . . but admiration is one thing and assimilation is another; and nothing so blended itself with the structure of his interior mind as the creations of Brown."¹ At a time when Shelley and Mary closely shared their intellectual interests no doubt she too read Brown with absorbed attention. In her *Journal* for 1815, she records: "Shelley read *Edgar Huntley* to us"; and "Read *Philip Stanley*,"—the English title of *Clara Howard*. In the "list of books read in 1815" appear also *Wieland* and *Ormond*.² One other novel she must have read, either then or later, for in *The Last Man* she finds her description

reaching 50,000 a year. And they were issued from practically every early printing press. There are more than 2000 in the Library of Congress collection, and a much larger number at Worcester.

¹ *Works of Peacock*, ed. Cole, III, 409-410.

² Mrs. Marshall, *Life of M. W. Shelley*, I, 100, 101, 123.

